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Reagan aide cites 'foreign agent' data

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WASHINGTON - The White House, challenged to support President Ronald Reagan's charge that "foreign agents" were involved in the nuclear freeze movement, yesterday cited several government papers and articles in conservative magazines as evidence.

"There is considerable US documentation on this," said deputy press secretary Larry Speakes.

However, the four unclassified State Department publications listed by the White House make only general assertions that the Soviet Union promotes peace movements, and there are no specific allegations in the government documents that the nuclear freeze movement in the United States has been infiltrated.

"There's no question about foreign agents that were sent to help instigate and help create and keep such a movement going," Reagan said at his press conference Thursday night. He also said there was "plenty of evidence" to back up his suggestion last month that the nuclear freeze movement was being manipulated by those who want to weaken America.

Reagan said he could not "go beyond" his description of foreign involvement "because I don't discuss intelligence matters and that's what I would be getting into."

The President's remarks triggered strong reaction yesterday. Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), a co-sponsor of the nuclear freeze measure in the Senate, said he would ask Reagan for the names of the "agents" involved. "I fought the communists in China when I was with the Navy. I fought them on the platforms, in a debate on an ideological basis. I just haven't found one in the nuclear freeze movement," he said.

Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), the leading House advocate of the freeze movement, accused Reagan of "McCarthyist" tactics.

a reference to the unsubstantiated allegations of communist influence by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. "That's the oldest game in the world, to impugn the motives of those who oppose you on policy issues... It's a ludicrous charge on its face."

The American Civil Liberties Union echoed those remarks, saying: "It is disheartening to see an American President returning to the tactics of McCarthyism. Charges of secret manipulation by foreign agents poison the well of public debate."

Reuben McCormack, Washington director of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, noted that freeze resolutions were adopted in eight of the nine states where they were on the ballot in November. "Rather than accept the advice of the voters," he said, "regrettably he is now choosing to smear the integrity of those loyal Americans who believe that a halt to the Soviet-US arms race is in the best interest of both countries."

When Speakes was asked at the daily White House briefing what evidence Reagan had to support his charges, the spokesman was ready with a list of publications. He cited the four State Department documents, an out-of-print House Intelligence Committee report completed in February 1980 before the nuclear freeze movement was formed, articles from such conservative publications as Reader's Digest, Commentary and the American Spectator, and studies by two conservative private groups, the Heritage Foundation and the American Security Council.

One of the State Department papers, entitled "Expulsion of Soviet Representatives from Foreign Countries, 1970-81," has no mention of the American nuclear freeze movement, but notes that in 1981 a Soviet official was "charged by Danish officials with passing money to local peace and antinuclear groups and others from Malaysia,

Egypt and the United Kingdom."

Two other State Department publications on "Soviet Active Measures" discuss Soviet methods to "use international and front organizations."

"In recent months," says a paper published last July, "the main thrust of front activity has been to try to see that the peace movement in Western Europe and the United States is directed solely against US policy and that it avoids any criticism of the Soviet nuclear threat."

Another State Department paper calls the World Peace Council - which, according to US freeze movement activists, has had only a marginal role in the US nuclear freeze efforts - an "instrument of Soviet foreign policy."

The organization, based in Helsinki, Finland, is funded primarily by the Soviet Union, the paper says. "In NATO countries, it has exploited fears of nuclear war by stimulating and/or sponsoring antinuclear rallies and advocating Soviet-sponsored disarmament policies," it adds.

Michael Krepon of the Committee on East-West Accord said yesterday that the World Peace Council's involvement in the freeze movement in this country was "either slight or nonexistent." With a trace of sarcasm in his voice, he added, "They are very shadowy, indeed. No one can find them."

Ellis Woodward of Ground Zero, a group advocating arms control, said of the World Peace Council's activity here, "As best I can tell, it's little or none at all."

Markey said he had never had contact with the group. He said the White House "documentation is all so much blue smoke and mirrors."

When Lyndon K. Allin, a White House spokesman who specializes in foreign affairs, was asked yesterday to pinpoint any charges against the freeze movement in the State Department documents, he

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